

Winter
1977-1978

Mrs. Harold E. Brown
"View Point"
Old North Road, Rt. 143
Worthington, Mass. 01098

STONE WALLS



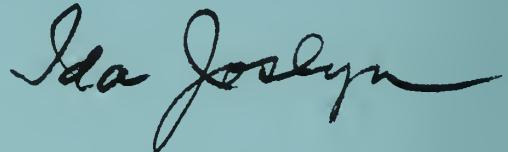
STONE WALLS has meant, for those of us who put it together, an experience in creating a truly community enterprise. We wonder what it had meant to the readers for whom this creation is ultimately made.

When an issue of STONE WALLS is finally ready to send out, the editors are happily aware of all the things we like about it: an unusually attractive cover, the lay-out of articles which we particularly liked, the over-all effect. And we are painfully aware of the errors, the things that don't always look quite the way we expected.

When an issue of STONE WALLS finally reaches you as a reader, what do you say?

We would like to use some reader's comments in this space for some of the issues. Won't you please write to us if you have a comment you would like to share?

In the last two issues of STONE WALLS we have included inside our front cover the following statement: "the editors of STONE WALLS assume no responsibility for non-commissioned manuscripts, photographs, drawings, or other material. No such material will be returned unless submitted with a self-addressed envelope and sufficient postage." We are grateful for the many manuscripts that our readers have sent us, and we depend upon a continuation of such contributions. We take reasonable precautions as to the safety of such material, but we cannot absolutely guarantee that it will not be damaged or lost. We urge contributors to keep copies of manuscripts, and to send valuable photographs or other material only under the strictest care.



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Worthington
His. Society

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Photograph by Jorge Fernandez-Sierra

The Winter of '77

by Brooke Lynes

Winter has always been a time for me to stay inside and endure. The cold goes to my bones and stays there. Last winter was worse than usual — the cold and damp started in early October with a stark and dismal landscape and no snow to dress it up.

Why, then, will I perk up when someone recalls the winter of '77? Well, it started to get better when the snow came in January. The children began risking their necks at the Snow Basin. We had three four-legged young ones to help us to like winter.

The State Forester came in February to instruct us about our woods. We had broken one appointment with him in January because of the bitter cold. So, although this time it was 5 degrees below zero, I was too embarrassed to put him off again.

With several layers of winter garb, topped off by an enormous snowmobile suit, I couldn't bend over far enough to adjust my snow-shoe bindings. The men were kind enough to do it for me, and off we went. Sure enough, my ears and nose began to say "ow!" and every bone to ache. I could tolerate it only because the forester was so interesting. We made a wide circle through the woods and came out by the small cabin our son had built.

"Well, will you look at that!" said the forester.

"Look at what?" said we.

"There's a raccoon poking her head out of the screened peak of that cabin!"

"Oh, that's Jasper", we explained. We went on to tell him how Jasper had come to us as a pathetic orphan in June, how she had grown up with our kitten as a member of the family. How in the fall Jasper had begun to assert herself, so that in the event of an argument with her she was

likely to bite! But we had put off making the obvious hard decision until one night she had wanted to chew up the ceiling in the boys' bedroom and Geoff wouldn't let her. So she had gotten on his bed and had refused to move. Geoff, who was too tired to put up with this, grabbed her by the scruff of the neck and tossed her out the door, into what seemed to be a big, bad world for a half-grown raccoon. I had a fret about it — what about cars? other animals? the cold? We expected to see her the next morning begging for food as usual, but no Jasper. We called and looked everywhere, and finally found the clever beast. She had made the cabin her house and home. All that fret wasted. At that point I had made the decision that from now on she would have to live outside. Everyone tried to dissuade me, particularly Jasper. She could climb anything, and it seemed for awhile that every window I looked at had Jasper peering in.

We put food out for her: peanuts and raisins were her favorite items. We waited for her to hibernate, but she didn't, even though the ground was frozen and the weather dismal. Whenever I went out to get Brussels sprouts, she would come to help. Her joy at having company was pathetic.

Finally, when there was heavy snow, she tore up an old foam mattress in the cabin, made a nest and went to sleep. Occasionally the kids would go out to check her out. Pulling back the pieces of foam, they would find her curled up in a tight warm ball. It would take her about five minutes to become fully awake. Then she would gratefully consume raisins and nuts, but not leave the cabin. Too much snow, she said.

The forester found all this interesting,

but I was getting colder standing there talking so we went on to a large smooth area of bright snow and sunlight with evergreens and glistening blue sky for contrast.

Ouch! How cold that snow was on my face, particularly when said face was buried in it. What on earth! That rascallion, Jasper! She had followed us and, getting tired of floundering, had tried to catch a ride on the back of one of my snow shoes.

My husband, David, helped me up, laughing the while, and Jasper climbed up on my shoulder to get a proper ride. She didn't like the snowmobile suit hood, and so pulled it off, also the wool cap underneath, the hair band and the barrett. Then she wrapped herself around the back of my head, hands on each eyebrow, and might as well have said "Giddap!"

We romped about in the open space (the garden in summer) for a while, (I think the forester was quite astonished) and then went our separate ways. But the real astonishment was mine. I was no longer miserable with the cold. The subject had been changed.

A few days later, David finished work early, and as it was a fairly decent day, I suggested that we go snowshoeing. Surprised, but willing, he agreed and decided to take along Myrrhlynn, the puppy who had joined the family in January. He is part Newfoundland, part Irish setter, and part Great Pyrenees. He must have been about two months old by then, and though only the size of the cat, his paws showed great promise. In fact, those paws served the purpose of built-in snow shoes in short excursions around the house.

We set off slowly so that Myrrhlynn could keep up. Coordination is not his long suit. We chuckled, watching that very black soft ball of fur learn about different kinds of snow. His gait might be best des-



Photograph by Brooke Lynes

cribed as bumble, tumble, flop. But he loved it.

As we went deeper into the woods we noticed that our kitten, Gen-Gen, had decided to join us. (Do you know that cats loved to go for walks with people if frequent rest stops are taken? Despite their quickness, their endurance is limited.) Gen-Gen has distinct black and white markings and always appears handsome in the house. Outside in the snow, however, he gave all the appearance of needing a bath, his white coat looking dingy and yellow against the white snow.

When we stopped for a rest, Myrrhlynn tried chewing snowshoes. Try as he might, he couldn't pick them up, so he got bored and decided to pounce on the cat. On the first try, he overshot his mark and landed in a heap. The cat saw his chance and pounced on the puppy. What a tangle of fur and snow! Finally the cat got tired and scampered up a tree. Myrrhlynn looked and looked, but just couldn't find his target.

And so we proceeded, slowly, and with laughter at our two four-footed followers. Where the snow was soft, the cat would stay right in our tracks where the snowshoes had packed it down. Every now and then, he would test off to the side, spread-

ing his paws to make his own snowshoes. Sometimes the snow was too soft, and he would sink in up to his chin; then he'd go back to our tracks. Otherwise he would go off on his own, Myrrhlynn floundering after.

The next time I checked on their progress, who should I see angling through the woods to cross our path but good old Jasper. She plowed her way through, leaving a small ditch behind for a track.

The kitten and the puppy were overjoyed. After much nose sniffing they started a game of tag —up, down, round and round. Myrrhlynn couldn't quite manage the tree climbing part, but he certainly tried. Once Jasper got up on an old stump. (She likes to get up on anything to check the surroundings.) The puppy was able to knock her off and get up himself — king of the castle.

Finally they all curled up to take a nap. As we didn't want to wait around, we picked up the sleepy infants and carried them back to their respective houses.

From then on we went out with them



Photograph by Brooke Lynes

every chance we got. I no longer even bothered to check the temperature. (If you get far enough away from yourself, most miseries are forgotten, I guess.) Thanks to three unlikely friends I grin when I think of the winter of '77 and look forward to the next.

• • •

Bertha MacGowan Bronson

by Louise Mason



Mrs. Bertha Bronson

I was born in Huntington on Norwich Hill in October 1878, attended school up there, then went to Huntington High School. I went one year to Conwell Academy in South Worthington while living with my uncle and aunt, Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs in Worthington. My cousin Leslie Gibbs and I drove to school in South Worthington every morning and back every night. Then I went to Fitchburg Normal School one year; I didn't graduate — just took courses there. I was working in Southampton at the Searles home in the summer when one of the school committeemen in

Montgomery came there and wanted to know if I would take the #5 district school in Montgomery, the Russell Street School, beginning in January, and I said yes I would. So I went there to teach — age sixteen!

It was a snowy cold winter morning when I left my home on Norwich Hill to go to the Russell Street school in Montgomery for the first time. A snow fall of about six inches the night before had laden the fir trees so that when we drove under them we got a shower of snow. As we rode along we passed some children walking to school. We drove into the Wesley Clark drive where I was to board and I lifted my trunk out and hauled it up the back stairs to the little bedroom which could be easily heated from the room below. I met Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Clark, their two daughters Elizabeth and Mary, and a man from Huntington who boarded there. As soon as I arrived the boarder went over to the school house which was almost across the road and built a fire in the big wood-burning box stove. Of course in those days you had to do all your own janitorial work — to supply the school, sweep it, keep it clean and build you own fire. But all the time I was there this man built my fires for me. I went over to the school house and found it in very bad condition. The plaster walls were bare and cracked, there were no shades at the windows, the blackboards needed to be repapered, the floor boards were very wide and cracked, the old desks were all carved up, and the teacher's desk — instead of having a drawer in it you lifted up the whole top to get what you wanted underneath.

The first day about twenty children arrived. The older boys and girls usually had to stay at home in the spring and fall to help their fathers and mothers in the fields and home, so the older ones went to school in winter. That's why I had so many

boys and girls that year. I found they had to go to a spring some distance away to get a pail of water to put in the back room. Everyone drank from the same long shiny dipper so impetigo was quite prevalent. I wanted to get rid of that as quickly as I could. I asked the children to bring cups from home with their names pasted on the bottom and I put screws along the wall to hang the cups on. They would dip the water from the pail into their cups and soon we had no more impetigo. The children brought their dinners to school in tin pails which we set on the back of the stove in winter to thaw out. As soon as possible I got a little cupboard with shelves that I put in the back corner and we got dishes, cups, forks, and knives and then the children could take their warm dinners out of the tin pails and eat them on plates. I went home to dinner every noon, as the school house was right across the road from where I boarded.

The toilet was quite a ways up the hill from the school house, so when the children had to go in winter a big boy or girl would have to carry them up on their shoulders and then bring them back. I got two reflector lamps, one to put on each side of the school room, because Mr. Lewis of Huntington, the preacher there, held prayer meetings in the school house every Thursday night and people all around would gather there for the service.

About that time Mr. Myron Kelso of Montgomery was elected to the school committee and he began to make some changes in the school. The old floor was taken up and new narrow solid boards put down, the old desks were taken away and new desks put in their place, the old boards covered with new blackboard cloth and the walls papered. We got a very nice big picture to hang on the wall, and I brought from home a large picture of George Washington taking the oath of office as President of the United States and

another large picture of Abraham Lincoln. I already had some very nice mottoes that Mr. Stickney of Norwich Hill had written for me to put up on my walls and the room looked much better. At first there were no shades so I tacked screening over the lower part of the windows and the children could press pretty leaves in the fall, wax them, and paste them up on that screen where they looked very pretty. Mr. Kelso finally had shades put up and I made short curtains for the windows so it really looked homey. We collected all different kinds of leaves and pinned them on the curtains. We kept track of all the birds we saw every year, and the flowers. One year we picked over two hundred different kinds of flowers and we had seen over one hundred kinds of birds. Each pupil would write the name on the blackboards.

I think I only taught one year before I married Spencer Bronson and went to Russell to live. They used to have parties around at the different houses in the country and of course I was always invited to the parties. My husband used to play the violin so he was there to play the violin for them to dance at the kitchen parties or to play the organ whichever way they wanted. So he met me there. Afterwards he said, "I fell in love with you while you were cutting cakes in the pantry." He was born in Montgomery and after he was born his family forded the (Westfield) River where the golf links (Whipperton Club) are now, and they lived in the first house on the right hand side where the Cortises used to live. That house is gone now. I heard his mother say he used to take his little violin when he was five years old and go out and sit on the rocks and play it. Of course after that he studied a lot and he used to be with the orchestra in Northampton. And then he was the leader of the orchestra at Chester, and of course at these parties he played and they used to dance. I didn't intend to teach after I was married. But Mr. David Allen came and asked me if I would go

back there and teach because they couldn't get a teacher who would come up to the country to do it. So I did; I went back. So now the bridge (at Russell) was washed away so that when I was teaching up there (Montgomery) I had to go down and cross on the ferry to get across to the other side and walk from Russell up to my school every morning and back every night (two miles each way). The ferry crossed just about where the bridge used to be and Margaret Peckham's father had charge of that ferry and he took me across.



Hazel L. Hommedieu, Ethel Clark, Mrs. Bronson, Adaline Clapp, Charles Clapp, Gelaine Hutchinson, Grace Healy & Earl Hutchinson.

So I taught there altogether twenty years and saw many changes. The town supplied all the books and crayons and things like that that we needed. At first there was no Superintendent of Schools but after a little while we had one and he used to visit and the school committee used to come frequently. We had a singing teacher and a drawing teacher — once a week. All the subjects were taught: reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and the drawing, and singing. When I first went there I had about twenty pupils of all grades through the eighth. I taught algebra for first, second, and third year high, and first year geography, I

remember that, and rhetoric; so we had the first eight grades and the first year high. They came to school when they were four and a half years old. I had a pupil up there, he lived just a short distance from the school, and he came to school at four-and-a-half and was so tiny I had to sit him up on my desk. I couldn't teach him to read, he was so little. His name was Edward Carter and he lived just across from the Holcomb house.

How did I manage to teach all the different grades at one time? Well, of course they had certain lessons that were given to them the day before that they had to do, so that they could be working on those until their own classes started. Then we used to have spelling bees and spelling bees were held in the town hall to see which class could stand up the longest. Then on special occasions I would put on entertainments at Christmas and so on, and at graduation I had graduation certificates to give to the children. At the last of my being there there were only three or four pupils left.

Many things happened the first few years I was there. Mr. Wesley Clark, who was a lawyer as well as selectman, passed away and his wife also and the place was sold to a Mr. Calvin Clapp with his wife and three children. I asked Mr. Clapp if he would plant a maple tree in the front yard and make some shade for the school house. He bought a good sized one and set it out in the yard. We were much more comfortable because before sometimes in the warm weather we had to go outdoors under the big tree across the road or over by the woodshed and have our classes there. Sometimes we would take a trip through the woods to the river bank and see the trains going back and forth almost across from the Mortimer house. We would eat our lunch there and then come back and look for flowers and birds on the way. Quite a few families had children in

school there. The Holcombs lived up there and had a family and also took state children who came to school, too. The Clark family — a son and three daughters. The Carringtons sent one and then up the hill was the Williston family. He had one son, Clifford Williston, and they took state children, too. Then the children came down from the road leading up to Montgomery — a lot of different children came from there. Over the years there were changes in other families around there. The Holcomb family had moved away and the Charles Healey family moved over into their place. Across the road was the Carter family and they moved away finally, and other families came in later.

Later on I used to take the children to the Eastern States Exposition every year and we stayed there all day and then met at night and came home together. We went by bus. I kept the smaller children with me most of the time, but sometimes we would let them run and tell them where to meet us at the end of the day. Also they used to have competitions in West Springfield where the different country schools around met to give their students stunts to do and win prizes. Well, I knew what to expect so at recess and at noon the children used to practice walking on a little narrow



*Mrs. Bronson and her class, Westfield.
Courtesy of Alice Britton*

board and not falling off and other such stunts. But we went to that contest and my little school of only five pupils at that time won the silver cup. Cecil Healey did his stunt so many times they had to stop him and today he has the silver cup in his home in West Springfield. It had engraved upon it the name of the Russell Street school, my name — the teacher's name, and the names of the five pupils. I put it in the museum in Montgomery when the school was given up, but Cecil wanted it so they let him have it and he still has it today. I don't know what became of all my big pictures but they may be up there in the museum in Montgomery; I'm not sure.

So I stayed and taught there altogether for twenty years before they decided to close the school for awhile and then some other families with children moved in and they found another teacher, Bessie Smith of Russell, as I had gone to Woronoco to teach. Most all those people have passed

away. There were two girls in Huntington, Mrs. Stanley Smith and Mrs. Albert Smith — they are still living, and Hilda Healey who lives on Long Island, and one or more of the Hutchinson boys in Florida. Ethel Clark still lives in Montgomery on the old home place. She's the only one of the family left.

I had the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders in that Woronoco school and over 40 pupils. They didn't have seats enough for them all so they had to put seats in the aisles. I finally told the Superintendent, "This is too much. I have twenty children in the first grade and all the other two grades besides and I can't carry all that". He divided the first grade and second grades which didn't help too much and later he put the 3rd grade in with the 4th, 5th, and 6th and it was easier after that. Anyway I stayed there nine years and from there I went to Russell. By that time my husband had died (1922) and I was living in West-



*Mrs. Bronson and one of her classes.
Courtesy of Alice Britton*

field with my sister. I went back and forth to school by bus. I taught twenty years in Russell where I had the 5th and 6th grades, about thirty-five pupils I guess, but that was easier with just two grades. I also taught music in the 7th and 8th grades and the teachers in those grades would come in and teach science and some of the grammar in my room while I was in theirs. That was the way we did it at first.

And then I taught for a very short time —it's hardly worth mentioning — up in Huntington High School for a few days at a time in place of the teacher who was sick, and sometimes had to act as principal. Anyway it was good experience for me.

(Olive Winn: You were the organist at the Methodist Church in Russell for years.) Yes, and I was teaching a class in the Sunday School and if somebody had a play I sang and I sang in the choir. I had a very nice alto voice and my husband and I were often called upon to play and sing together at funerals. He used to sing in the church, also. Once in a while he took

me up to Chester or Montgomery to play and sing at a funeral and we would sing at funerals all around. He had a lovely tenor voice and I the alto. Well, then I had a lot of strep throats and almost died and that ended my singing. I could never sing a note after that and I felt terrible because I loved that. We had concerts in the town hall — one year we all blackened our faces and darkened our hands and looked all dark and at that time Wesley Clark played the piano for us. I don't think there's anyone still living today that was in that minstrel show. There was Judge Copeland — his son was there and he was in it.

I retired in 1942 because the doctor told me that I should. He didn't think I was strong enough to keep on. But I did teach again. I tutored a lot in Westfield. A lot of my pupils used to come to the house but if they couldn't I would go to theirs. I used to drive and had a car. I didn't give up my car until I was 85 years old. Then I was beginning to lose my eyesight and hearing.

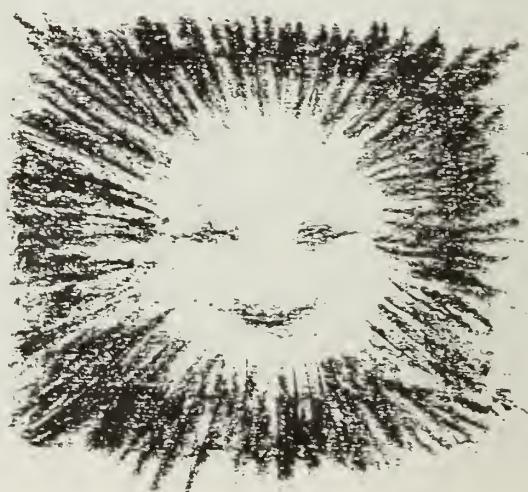
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Weather Report

by Ida Joslyn

*Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cucu;;
Groweth Seed and
bloweth mead
And springeth the wood
anew.
Sing Cuccu!*

Anonymous c. 1250



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

MARCH

1940 — First day of Spring

Spring is here, officially at least, but as far as residents of Worthington are concerned it is still midwinter. That is, unless one considers drifts from six to ten feet high lining the highways and almost obscuring the ground floors of home, to be spring weather.

In front of the Congregational Church is one of the highest of any of the drifts and Emerson Davis was performing a 'labor of love' yesterday by energetically shoveling out a narrow path through the snow to

allow Easter Services to be conducted Sunday... A motorist driving through the community is unable to see anything of single story dwellings except perhaps the chimney and roof peak... It has been the toughest fight for many a year the highway crews have had in Worthington to keep even the main highways open, for night after night the wind would shift in fresh batch of snow, which by morning would have obliterated the highway again.

From a newspaper clipping, courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.

MAY

1977 — May 10

Freak snowstorm buries Berkshires

Nature springs cold surprise

By GLENN A. BRIERE
Union Staff

Springtime in Western Massachusetts was rudely interrupted Monday by a winter storm that left up to 14 inches of snow in parts of Berkshire County and caused about 17,000 power outages in the region.

THE STORM *by David Lynes*

As I was going to sleep Sunday May 8, I heard rain on the roof and I thought it would be a rotten day when I woke up. When I did wake it was to hear the telephone ringing. My mother answered it so I wouldn't have to get out of bed. I called her and she said, "Go back to sleep, there is no school." So I tried to go back to sleep but I couldn't.

So I got out of bed and looked out the window to see why there was no school.

What I saw out the window was not what I expected. All I could see was snow. I thought I was dreaming, but I wasn't. I got dressed just in time to go to my grandmother's with some water for coffee. When we got there she had already melted some snow and was heating it with some sterno. I brought some wood in for her fire.

When we got home I ate breakfast. By that time Geoff, my brother, had waked up. My father, Geoff, and I went out to

see how bad the road was. It was too bad to get through. We went back home and Geoff went to clear some of the road. I said to Geoff, "I'll be out to help as soon as I finish getting some snow for water."

When I went out again, I met Geoff coming back up the road. I saw a branch so bent that if there was one more pound of snow, it would break. So I ran up to it and shook it as hard as I could and it was as good as new. I did that to about five branches on the road and to all those on the driveway. But the driveway was still a mess of fallen branches.

Then I went in and changed to dry pants, and Geoff and I went out to the road with his car. I had moved one branch out of the way when I heard a crack. Geoff shouted, "Run toward the car!" That's just what I did. A fork of the maple tree had broken from the weight of the snow. It missed me by about ten feet. I said, "I'm not going to move that one" and Geoff said, "O.K. I will go get the chain saw. You stay here and keep cars away." After he left, a truck came up and I said to the man in it, "You're not going to get through for awhile, my brother just went back to get our chain saw." The man said, "I've got a chain saw. I'll start cutting." When Geoff came back, he couldn't get our saw started, so he just moved brush.



Sam Hill Road, Worthington

Earlier, my sister had said, "Missy's stove pipe fell down and it was smoking a lot because of the wind." (Missy is a friend.) So we went down to Missy's then to fix the stove pipe for her. When we got down to her house it wasn't smoking any more and she said it would be all right.

We left her and started back home. When we got to our driveway we decided to go see another friend, Mark. We were going down Lyman Flats and there was a branch in the road so we got out to move it, and three more beyond it.

At the end of Lyman Flats there is a small hill and an up-grade after that. Well, we got up the hill fine, but on the up-grade there was another branch so we had to stop. When we got going again, we slid to the left because the stupid road slopes into the ditch. We got stuck.

When we got out, it took about twenty minutes to get to Dodwell's Road and Geoff said, "We are going home, I am almost out of gas." So we turned around and got down the road about fifty feet and the car ran out of gas. So we pulled into Granger's driveway. Geoff said, "I'll walk down to Mark's and get his truck." It took us from the time we got stuck to the time we got home about two hours.

I finished this article by candle light because the power was out all day.



Photographs by Ellie Lazarus

JULY

1874 — July 11.

THE MIDDLEFIELD FLOOD

For over thirty years the main reservoir had been fully able to control all the sudden increases in the amount of flowage caused by spring or summer rains, but on Saturday, July 11, 1874, a hard storm set in which continued in torrents all Saturday night and a part of Sunday. Upon the high hills surrounding the sources of Factory Brook and the "Goose Pond" there was a veritable cloudburst. That a disaster was impending was first realized by Deacon Harry Meacham, who, fearing for the safety of the two upper reservoirs near his far, went to see what the conditions were about four o'clock Sunday afternoon. He soon discovered that the "Goose Pond" had broken loose. While he stood looking at the dam of the upper reservoir, he was horrified to see a heavy landslide on the lower slope of the embankment. Knowing at once what this meant, he hastened home, mounted his horse, and dashed down the country road giving the alarm. As he approached the Center he enlisted the aid of Orrin Pease in spreading the news. Mr. Pease, knowing he could make better time on foot than on horseback, set off at top speed across lots. As he neared the Hollow he attracted the attention of John Metcalf, son of Walter Metcalf, who, seeing Mr. Pease in the distance, gesticulating wildly and shouting the deacon's message: "Reservoir burst!", ran to Factory Village and warned the inhabitants of the impending flood.

Upon hearing the news, William Blush immediately had a horse saddled and sent George Brown down the valley road and on to the "Switch" to spread the alarm. When Brown came to return after fulfilling his mission he found the water so high and the road so washed away that he was compelled to travel over the hills.

Deacon Meacham, upon reaching the Center, shouted the news of the coming deluge and continued his way to the Hollow. Matthew Smith, who lived in the Center, upon hearing the news, started out to the southeast, drove over the mountain in an hour and a half and warned the dwellers in Huntington of the coming flood. At about the same time that Metcalf learned the news, James Talmadge Church, who lived a short distance up the hill east of the main reservoir, caught sight of a great wave of muddy water dashing into the pond where the brook entered, and realizing that the upper dam had broken, ran down to the threatened village to announce the approaching danger. Happily the warnings were given in time and most of the residents took to the hills. Oliver Blush refused to leave his home, in spite of the prayers and entreaties of his friends and neighbors, declaring, "If I'm bound for Hell I'll go there swimming."

Probably the narrowest escape from loss of life occurred on the farm situated at the head of the reservoir on which the Chamberlain family had just settled. Mr. Chamberlain, who was outdoors with the children, drew attention to the fact that the water in the brook was rising rapidly without realizing the reason therefor. His wife, however, saw the impending danger from the house and screamed to her husband that a flood was coming, ordering the children to run to high land, which they did. Miss Sarah Chamberlain, who was one of these children, recalls vividly the great wall of water towering above them, rolling along like an immense wall of mud with trees and branches moving up and down on its surface, and how it seemed to burst with a loud roar and swerve to the east, just missing the house, but carrying away all the fine soil and the apple trees, leaving this once productive farm a desert of rocks and gravel.

An amusing incident is told of Mrs.

Oliver Blush, whose house stood across the street from the mill. When the waters rose and began to cross her doorsill she tried to sweep them back with her broom. But the flood came so fast that she had to retreat to the upper story, coming down after the waters had subsided to find her carpets covered with mud, slime, and gravel.

Lawns and gardens and orchards were stripped of their rich earth to the bare rocks. Fortunate indeed it was that the flood happened on a Sunday when the travel on the road was light. As it was, everybody escaped and the only living

thing known to have perished was a pig drowned in Chester.

Deacon Harry Meacham, who achieved local fame through his long ride to warn the Blush Hollow residents of the approaching flood in 1874, is the only Middlefield man known to have been made the subject of a poem. It was written by ARTHUR HASKELL, a resident of Peru, and was first printed in a Southbridge newspaper. Its quaintness and originality make it an interesting addition to the local folklore of the region.

THE MIDDLEFIELD FLOOD

*“Good Deacon Meacham, aged and gray,
Sat in his house on a Sabbath Day
Reading about Father Noah and his flood,
and his great big ark of Gopher wood.
And he suddenly closed the sacred book
And went to the window to take a look
At the green old Middlefield hills and plains,
He said to his wife, ‘I declare, how it rains’;
And his good old wife also declared that she had
Never seen such a shower in all her born days
Except when Noah went into the ark with all his worldly gains.*

*“So the deacon took down his oldest umbrel’
And went out in the rain which in torrents fell,
Soberly thinking of floods and disasters,
Fearing the cows might get drowned in their pastures.
For he knew that the reservoir down at the brook
Was full to the brim, and had a serious look.
So he hurried along, this venerable man,
And stood on the top of the reservoir dam,
And to his astonishment he saw that goose-pond
Had broken loose and that the damned waters were
Rushing through the dam like a wild ram.*

*“So he hurried back in fearful alarm,
Mounted old Dobbin that stood in the barn,
Not stopping for saddle, for spur or for goad,
He shouted ‘Get up here’ and dashed down the road,*

*Down, down to Blush Hollow he fled like the wind
His hair and his coat-tails both streaming behind,
And his neighbors were shocked on that wet Sabbath Day,
To see the good deacon go rushing that way,
For they concluded he must be mad or crazy, or at
Least something dreadful was to pay.*

*‘But on flew the deacon, not stopping to hear,
The roar of the waters most dreadfully near,
And the clatter of hoofs and the pant of his horse,
Like a cavalry charge shook the earth in its course,
‘Till the folks of Blush Hollow stood breathless and pale
As the Deacon and Dobbin dashed into their vale,
For he warned them to ‘get up and git’ instantly
Both young and old, male and female.*

*‘Like the roar of a hurricane on came the flood
With the crash of an avalanche through the tall wood,
It came roaring and sweeping with terrible might,
For mill, bridge, and dwelling, unable to stand,
Were swept down the stream with the flood-wood and sand,
But the warning of good Deacon Meacham that day
Saved the folks of Blush Hollow from swimming away.
And when he saw not a life was lost not even a pig’s
He went home like a man, gave Dobbins some oats,
Took down his Bible and read some more about Noah and his flood,
And said to his wife, ‘I declare, this is dreadful, let us pray. ’*

Documentation and poem taken verbatim from
A History of the Town of Middlefield, Massachusetts
by Edward Church Smith and Philip Mack Smith (1924)

AUGUST

1890 — August 26.

TERRIBLE HAVOC OF THE WIND

The rain storm last Tuesday night was the most copious for many years, over four inches of rain falling, accompanied with a very high wind doing much damage in the south part of town (Worthington): blowing down a large barn for Cream-Gatherer Brooks and unroofing another; also felling many trees for Clement F. Burr and damaging his crops badly. It then

vented its rage upon our friend W.H. Bates taking, as he tells us, all, not even leaving a Kiefer pear. Scarcely is there a tree standing on all his possessions. His apple orchard of young trees was all uprooted, as well as the beautiful shade trees around the house. Mr. Bates himself only escaped being hurled over into Mr. Eager’s meadows by the tight grip he held on the northwest corner of Maria’s carpet loom.

From a newspaper clipping, courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.

SEPTEMBER
1938 — September 27

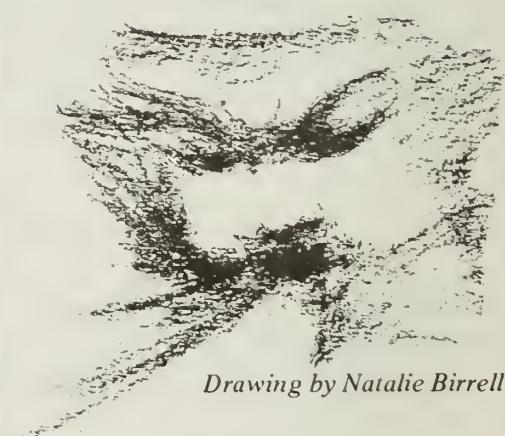
FLOOD AND HURRICANE



Courtesy of Lois Brown



Walter Buxton on remains of bridge swept away by the 1938 hurricane. Photograph by Roy McCann.



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

*Blow, winds and crack your cheeks!
Rage! Blow!
You cataracts and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeples,
drown'd the cocks!*

William Shakespeare
King Lear III, ii.

DECEMBER

1878 — December 6th or 7th

There was no snow on the ground, then a fresh soft snow to ten inches. Changed to rain and the wind veered to the south. The whole mass moved at once. Smaller bridges throughout the area were carried away. Chesterfield Gorge bridge was washed out.

Sidney Smart July 9, 1939
Courtesy of Worthington
Historical Society.

1920



Road crew clearing main highway.
Courtesy of Lois Brown

Circa 1930



*After an ice storm,
Harry Pease's barn, Worthington*

Photograph by George Joslyn

1942 — December 31

From the hill towns came weird stories of whole towns being isolated. Some hardy souls who were able to get into Blandford, for example, said that the sight that met their eyes was almost unbelievable. Hundreds of trees and poles were down and wires were sheathed in ice from one half to three inches thick. Roads leading into Blandford were blocked by large coated trees that had fallen down from the weight of tons of ice. Highways were sheets of ice. A foot of water ran over the main street in Blandford.

Springfield Union

JANUARY

1943 — January 17



*Walter Buxton's farm January 1943
Photograph by Ernest A. Hussar*

Courtesy of Lois Brown

1945 — January

96 inches of snowfall for the winter.

1957 — January 17



*In front of Congregational Church, Worthington,
Winter of 1945.
Archway was made by Emerson Davis.*

Photograph by Forrest Taylor



*Icicles on Bartlett's porch, Worthington,
January 17, 1957*

Courtesy of Lois Brown

1977 — January

A very heavy winter. During the usual 'January Thaw' the temperature reached 20 degrees! 107 inches of snowfall through February.



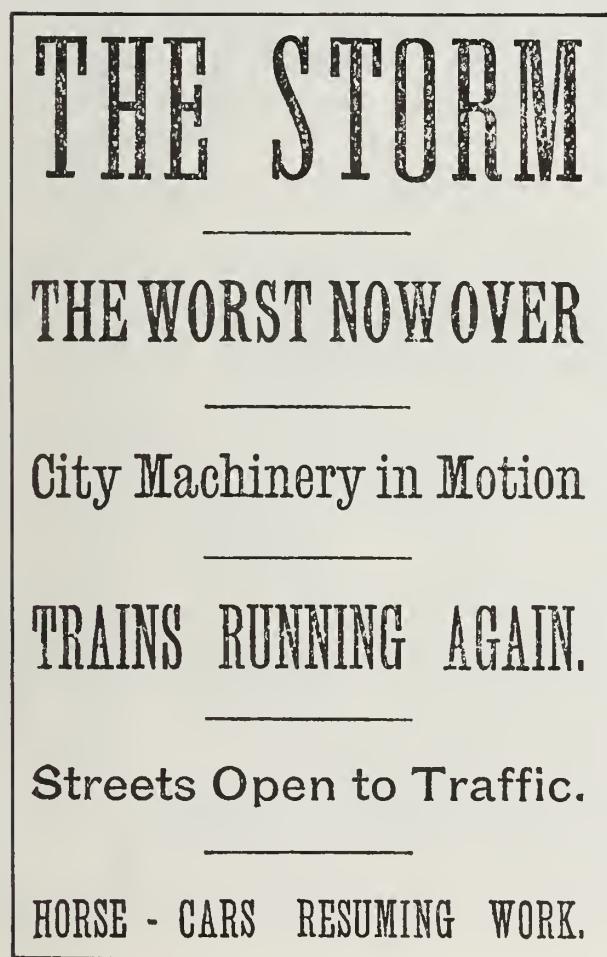
Drawing by Karin Cook

The Cook's only transportation — Winter 1977.

MARCH

1888 — March 14

1956 — March 8



Ice Storm March 8, 1956

Courtesy of Lois Brown

THE BLACK YEAR

1816 (some say 1819 or 1820)

This year was called the black year because there was frost during every month in the year.

I live in a big old house high in the Berkshire Hills. I love it — I love all of it: the wide board floors, the miles of white woodwork, the carved mantelpieces, even the roof that leaks in a north-easter.

*But often when I'm lonely
Then in my dreams I see
A little stone hut in the forest:
The place I want to be.*

I have a kitchen garden and flowers — daffodils in spring, peonies, iris, sun-drops and sweet william, zinnias and phlox until the frost blackens them. An old Golden Sweet appletree still bears edible fruit, and an ancient horse-chestnut and a towering larch tree guard my doorways.

*But there's a candle in the window
And the door is open for me
At the little stone hut in the forest:
The place I want to be.*

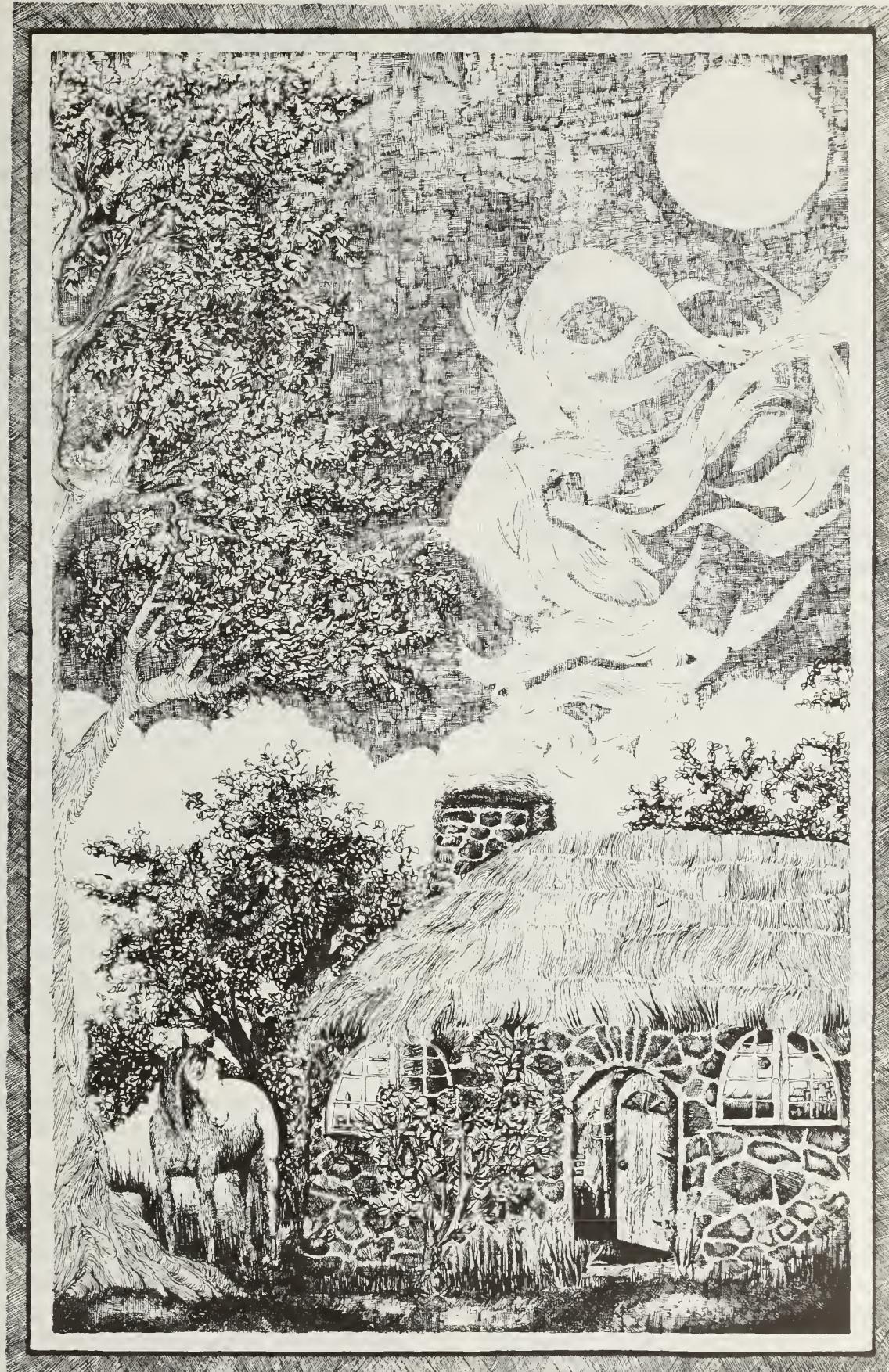
My house has a pasture edged with buttercups and clover, and goldenrod in the fall. We ride, my horse and I, on shaded roads, fern bordered, past trim new houses with swimming pools, and big old ones like mine. I know all the names, and friendly children wave at us as we ride by.

*But I think of softly needled paths
Where we might ride quietly
To the little hut in the forest:
The place we want to be.*

In winter snow is drifted high around my house. Wind rattles the shutters. Birch logs blaze in the fireplace.

*But I can see in the dancing flames
That secret world I know
The little stone hut in the forest
Where sometimes I will go.*

by Ida Joslyn



Drawing by Heather Bargeron

Way Back When

by Barbara Viock

It's come and gone — the winter of "77" and even according to the memories of the "older folk" this was one to tell about years from now. But I wonder — was it that bad? Well, according to the papers, news media, and forecasters, it was undoubtedly one of the coldest winters on record. However, from the memories of the local residents and "Old Timers" that have been around these parts for many years, things weren't even half as bad this year as they had been WAY BACK WHEN.

Buster Watson, Ray Allen, and Al Carrington remember when ice was cut from the Westfield River, from what is now known as Texon Pond, but known as Chapin Gould at that time. This procedure was done using large hand saws and cutting the blocks out in huge cake form. From there it was transported by horse and sled to the "ice house" which many families in that area shared. The ice was put in a cement structure, in a sort of cellar, and covered with sawdust a few feet deep. This would keep it from melting all summer long. When needed, it would have to be dug out piece by piece, washed and then put in the ice box, which almost everyone had then, but it is a rare antique nowadays. It's been many years since this was done, mainly because of that "new invention" called refrigeration. However, how many people can now recall when the river has been frozen enough to walk on, much less to have horse and sled on it, or to cut huge cakes of ice? This year came close. Streams that hadn't frozen in years were frozen solid. It was the first time since I can remember that we have had to chop the running stream free of ice for our horses for water, and then have it frozen almost solid again the next day.

Most of the "kids", WAY BACK WHEN, will tell you that Thanksgiving meant a day to look forward to ice skating. That was more or less an annual event, I guess, like the swimming season starts now around Memorial Day. But — when was the last time any river or pond was frozen solid enough in November to go skating? I would say many a moon ago.

When we were kids no one heard of a heated bedroom. We heated the kitchen and living room and the rest of the rooms were shut off until spring. I'm sure many of us can remember piling blankets, coats, and anything we could find, on the beds to help keep us warm in those cold bedrooms on a real cold night. Once you had gotten settled down into bed it was nice and warm, but it sure was cold getting into and out of bed. I remember fighting with my sisters over whose turn it was take "Mickey" our dog, to bed. He would snuggle as close as possible so he could be warm, too. If it wasn't your turn for the dog, the next best thing was a soapstone or a brick heated on the stove and wrapped in a towel. A heated flat iron helped, too, but if you were "rich" or "lucky", you had a feather quilt or mattress which came up right around you and it was like sleeping on air.

In those days no one had to worry about whether or not the family car would start, hardly any one had one. If you wanted to go anywhere the horse would be hitched to the sleigh and off you would go. "She" always started, regardless of the weather.

Ray Allen can remember (and I hope this is right) his mother telling about coming from North Chester by horse and buggy. The year was roughly 1905, and his brother, who was very sick, had to get to the doctor in Huntington. The Westfield

River had flooded over into the field where Gateway School is now situated. Since it was impossible to go any further with the buggy, his mother carried the baby and walked on cakes of ice to dry land and continued on to the doctor's. Curious, I asked what happened to his brother. He lived, and is now 72, I was told.

Talking to Clara Burrow, who was brought up in the Cummington area and now lives in Westfield, I learned a lot of interesting things about that town, WAY BACK WHEN. She recalls that it was sure cold and there was plenty of snow when she was a young girl. Sometimes the horse had to be dug out to get to the store, as it would get mired in a snow drift as if it were quick sand. No one worried about being snow-bound in the "olden days" as everyone had food, usually enough for winter. Nearly everyone had a cow for fresh milk, and chickens, and barrels of flour and sugar. Today people live from day to day and if they are confined to the house for more than two days, things turn into an emergency situation.

Clara cannot recall that the school long ago was ever closed because of snow or bad weather, no matter how hard it was. One time she froze both her feet, and her grandmother put them in warm water to thaw them, so she could continue to school. The school was in what was then called "Lightning Bug", a sort of tiny settlement between East and West Cummington. It is still there, but it isn't called "Lightning Bug" anymore. Ward Streeter was a farmer in "Lightning Bug", and his two boys attended school with Clara. The teacher's name was Julia Ford. Her mode of travel back and forth to school was by horse and wagon or sled. Sometimes a sled called a "Tunker Sled" (straight, round poles from the front to the back with a pair of horses pulling it) was used. When the snow was heavy or real deep this Tunker Sled was used for breaking through

the road.

Sometimes in the spring when the river broke up there would be floods and ice cakes all over, making things in general very difficult for many people. When babies were born, they were born at home. The neighbors came in to assist with the birth. However, Dr. Starkweather came in from West Cummington by horse and carriage, and Clara can remember many times the good doctor walked to the homes to deliver a baby or to take care of the sick, when the weather was particularly bad. To hold the horse and keep it from straying while he was inside, there was a strong iron weight snapped onto the end of a halter-strap.

The stage went from Cummington to Williamsburg. That was about nineteen miles. Usually they found the biggest and strongest horses available. The stage had three seats, and for a light, a barn lantern. Soapstones were heated and kept under your feet to keep them warm, and you were covered with a blanket. The trip was primarily made to take mail from post office to post office. However, if you wanted to do some shopping, it usually stayed long enough to accommodate the passengers. The cost was something like twenty-five cents, one way. Clara said she couldn't remember exactly. I can't understand why, that was only about seventy years ago!!!

Two brothers owned and operated the stage and a hotel in Williamsburg. The post office was in the hotel. One brother was Bill Gabb. Packard's General Store was near the covered bridge in Cummington. Mabel Parsons, Clara's sister, worked at the store for years.

Streeter's Sawmill was the only place of employment in Cummington at that time. Most people owned and operated farms. However, Streeter's Sawmill employed ten or fifteen people. Mr. Streeter, the owner, was killed at the mill. Seems he fell on one of the saws. Later the mill was closed

down.

Every year Cummington Fair was held in September. That was the event everyone looked forward to. Clara had a nickel to spend. She remembers riding the merry-go-round and hunting for more nickels on the ground. Once in a while she was lucky and found one. What a thrill that was. It was about two and a half miles each way to

the fair, but the walk was well worth it.

Nowadays my girls are often inquisitive and ask, "Mom, tell us about how things were in the olden days," or "Were things really like that in the '50's?" Now that makes me start feeling old, and WAY BACK WHEN doesn't really seem so long ago after all.

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Memories of Greenwood

by Hilary Metzger

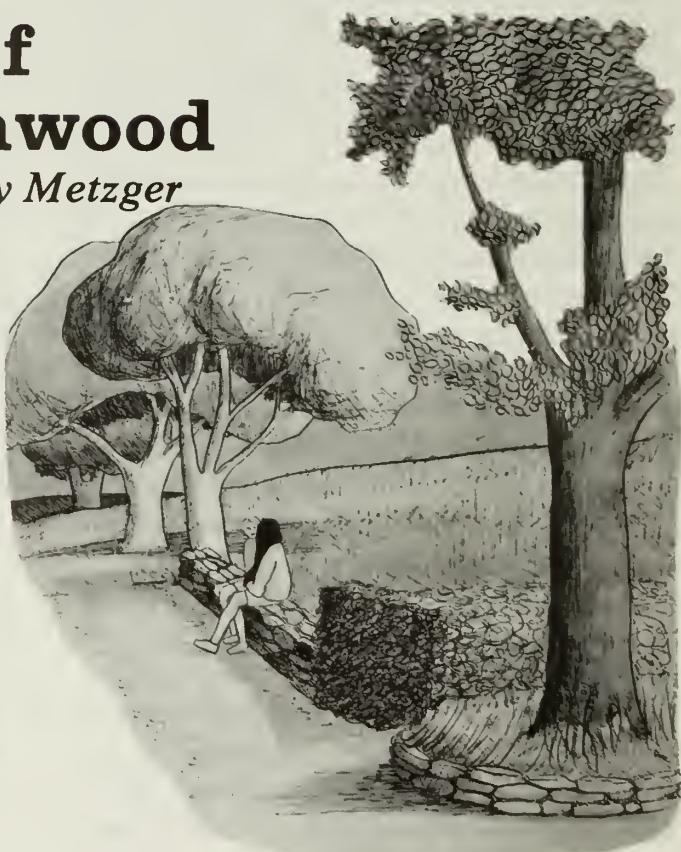
As my parents drove me down the driveway from the barn, where I had seen some of the camp's Saturday evening concerts, up on the hill I saw a large, white farmhouse with a stone porch. A few feet away from the house on one side of the driveway was a stone wall and past that a beautiful view of green hills and blue sky. Surrounding the house on all sides was a well-kept lawn, and emerging from the stone porch was a path leading to a cool, refreshing swimming pool. On one side of the path were laurel bushes and a lovely flower garden, and by the pool were strong sugar maple and apple trees.

On the stone porch stood a warm, smiling lady with happy blue eyes and white hair. She shook hands with my parents and introduced herself as Bunny Little, one of the directors at Greenwood. She also introduced me to my counselor, Marina.

"She's an oboist," Bunny said.

I'll always remember the way Bunny said that, as though knowing what instrument Marina played was to know the most important thing about her.

I soon learned that the whole camp was like that. Even my roommates who were only nine to thirteen years of age were



'By the pool were strong sugar maple and apple trees.'

Drawing by Donna Drew

introduced to me as violinists or flutists; everyone was a musician. Music united the place and brought everyone together.

Greenwood is an ensemble music camp, and little, if any, emphasis is put on individual playing; most emphasis is concentrated on the total music effect. Every student is in at least one ensemble (a small group) each week. It rehearses for forty-five minutes every morning. Orchestra also rehearses every morning, but for an

hour.

Everyone has a lesson on this Ensemble and Orchestra music once a week and is expected to practice on his own, for on Saturday night the ensembles and orchestra perform pieces in a concert open to the public. But not all the music is planned or performed on the Saturday night concert. A lot of music is played just for fun. Often a group gets together to sight-read music (quartets, quintets, and sometimes even orchestral music). These are called "zilch sessions." There is singing and bell ringing, and although the latter is performed in the Saturday night concert, it is largely done for fun. The representatives of different instruments in the company vary enormously from year to year, but as a general rule, no pianists are accepted unless they play a second instrument as well.



A "zilch session"

Drawing by Bernard Drew

The excitement before the Saturday night concerts is intense. Backstage, performers whisper to one another about how they are "so nervous" about a certain orchestral piece or even one measure in an ensemble piece. People tell one another which relatives have come to hear them. Meanwhile, friends hasten to reassure

them that they'll do very well, all the time wondering how they themselves will do. Though I tell myself that I am being very silly, I too, have been very nervous about certain places in certain pieces. But, in the end, when you come back stage after taking your bow and hearing all your friends and relatives congratulate you, you manage to smile, if not from success, then from relief.

One wonderful accomplishment of Greenwood is its mixture of musical with recreational activities. This makes the atmosphere less instructional and more like other camps. The mornings are spent rehearsing and practicing, but in the afternoons and evenings there are soccer, softball, and volleyball games. When it is a good day, people can go swimming. Sometimes, usually in the evenings, there are big, organized games like Treasure and Scavenger Hunts, Capture the Flag, Murder, and, my favorite, Charades. On their own, students also organize and play tennis and ping-pong games. All in all, it is a wonderful combination of fun and seriousness.

The combination of musical and non-musical activities only partially contributes to the relationship between the students and the counselors and instructors. Greenwood is a small camp; there are not more than forty campers with a very high ratio of teachers to students. (There are about eight teachers and five counselors.) The relationships between children and adults seldom raise any question of authority. First of all, the children are treated basically as adults and are expected (within reason!) to act like them. They are given a lot of responsibility. Secondly, music is so much a part of the place that it becomes a great part of the authority — it sets the rules. One boy once said that the only rule of Greenwood was to play in tune.

Greenwood has not always been in

Cummington. After Dorothy (Bunny) Little and her friend, Ruth McGregor, graduated from college, they took five of their students from the Smith Summer School and started a camp in northern Vermont. The sessions lasted only a month and, like the Smith Summer School and present-day Greenwood, it was a chamber music camp and stressed ensemble playing. The name of this place was Greenwood.

Bunny and Ruth stayed at the Vermont Greenwood for three summers (from 1933 to 1935). Then they rented a place near Harvard, so as to be near the Surette Summer Music School. Four years later they had to buy the property if they planned to stay, but they decided that the "Hutch", as it was called, was not quite what they had in mind, and so they left.

Bunny and Ruth bought the property in Cummington in the winter of 1939 just before Christmas. The previous owner lived in Springfield and used the farm as a country house where he went horseback riding and swimming. Greenwood today, thirty-seven years later, still follows the same routines started in the first summer. It had orchestra and ensembles which were performed — only then the concerts were given every Wednesday, instead of every

Saturday night.

The session lasts for six weeks and takes "kids" of fourteen through eighteen who are dedicated to their instruments and who have passed an audition. Generally these are children in the area or students of friends or alumni of the camp. In 1968 another, shorter, two-week session at the end of the summer was created for younger, generally less dedicated, musicians of ages nine through thirteen. The younger division has less music than does the older one. I have only been in this younger division, and have therefore, described only that session. I know, however, that in Big Camp there is a chorus in a Cummington church on Sundays and an orchestra just for strings set apart from the Big Orchestra which contains all the instruments. Otherwise, the older session is similar to the younger one.

I have been to Greenwood for only two years, but each time my parents drive me back down the driveway they have driven up only a few days ago and I reflect on the two weeks I have spent there, they seem to be the happiest, most active, most musical, but the shortest two weeks I've ever had, and it saddens me to think that I will have to wait a whole year before seeing the place again.

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Letter to An Editor

contributed by Olive Cole

For the budget
Worthington, Feb. 7th

Mr. Editor

In accordance with previous promise, I will now proceed to furnish you with a brief sketch of my present whereabouts, together with a few remarks upon the habits, customs, etc. of the people with whom I reside. Mr. Editor, were you ever in Wor-

thington? If not, pray by all means, that your coming be not in the winter. I have traveled some, read some, and always allowed full scope and free range to my powers of imagination, but never did I see, read or even dream of, such immense mountains of snow, as I have met with here in Worthington.

'Banks on Banks, successive rise,
Mountains up to pierce the skies . . .'

You have probably read of zephyrs, cool breezes, and all that sort of thing, but if you wish to study pneumatics under favourable auspices, if you would engage in a practical and thorough investigation of the science, and gain a perfect knowledge of the temperature, power, force, and velocity of air in motion, just come to Worthington in Midwinter; and you will get as near the headquarters of old Boreas himself as it is possible to go and live. I have been in the place six weeks or more and, upon my word, have yet to see the first calm and tranquil moment. But Winds,

'Mighty winds, whistling as they go,
Heaping up huge mountains of snow,
Always busy, they will never tire,
If there is room to heap it higher.'

I think our State Bank Commissioners would advance the interest of the state by investigating the condition and capital of Worthington Snow Banks, fully as rapidly as they have by examining the financial condition of chartered institutions.

Worthington is located on the Green Mountain range of hills and according to Doctor Holland of the Springfield Republican 'the topmost'. And from the same authority we learn it to be the abiding place of Angels. We are left in doubt with regard to their peculiar grade, but from the lofty elevation of the locality, we may safely infer that they are archangels. I had read in Revelations of Angels with trumpets and golden censers. But an angel with a regular old-fashioned brass warming-pan was, we thought, tasking our credulity beyond proper limits. Our curiosity being excited, led to an investigation of the subject, the result of which was as follows: The Doctor "having inbibed nameless quantities of that nameless fluid, which Gere calls 'John Rice's cider'" and, as he says, having been "led by soft and hardly perceptible graduations, toward the realm of forgetfullness" was probably laboring under an optical illusion; hence he mistook

the servant girl for an Angel. Oh, inglorious fall from the superlatively sublime, to the common realities of life. The Doctor speaks in highly eulogistic terms of the hospitality of his friend (who, by the way, is a gentleman of the first water, and one of Worthington's noblest sons) who not only catered for the inner man, but regarded the outer, by accepting the Doctor's challenge and sleeping with him "spoon fashion", rolling over exactly nineteen times in the course of the night in a perfectly scientific and satisfactory manner without the slightest catastrophe, or accident, to either party. So much for the Doctor, and his night and blow on the hills.

Society in Worthington is, or may be, divided into three distinct divisions or classes, as follows: 1st, The Shoemakers; otherwise known as "newcomers", a floating population and scum of society; that this class of citizens are legally entitled to the rights of suffrage is an undoubted fact, but their moral right to exercise those rights is a matter of doubt with some; 2nd, the Aristocracy — this class embraces all the office seekers, a clamorous, hypocritical crew — give them a chance to serve on a committee, and, witness the result. I've seen a picture of an anaconda swallowing an ox, horns and all, at one mouthful; and I've seen a four year old youngster in his first pair of new boots with a stick of candy in each hand, but these sights sink into utter insignificance in comparison with what I've seen here in Worthington. However, Pigmies are Pigmies still, though perched on Alps. 3rd, by far the largest class of society is the common people, or working class — honest, shrewd, well-meaning citizens, who mind their own business, and are emphatically the salt of the place.

The standard of morals in this place is very high, so high that few attain to it. No wonder that; for preaching and practice seldom, if ever, agree. As for amusements, Snap Up, alias bussing parties, are allow-

ed, countenanced even, by the older and wiser portion of the community, including the church, clergy, and medical faculty. But Dancing, that innocent diversion, which has been the popular and chief amusement of all nations, in all ages of the world, is utterly proscribed, voted unhealthy, demoralizing and unchristianizing; and no one but he who is possessed of sufficient stamina and independence of character, to think and act for himself, can buffet with all those waves of opposition, set afloat by superannuated and rheumatic old fogies, who spent their youthful days (or rather nights) in dancing, yet have grown old and decrepit and now begin to see the folly of it. Why can't they be easy, and let us see the folly of it, too? Lyceums, of which there are two, viz., The Worthington and the Young Men's Lyceum, are here numbered on the list of amusements and combining as they do the useful with the agreeable, form a pleasant and profitable pastime, and furnish a source of rational enjoyment to all classes of Society. Each of these associations has held a levee, or picnic party as they are christened in this locality, for the purpose of raising a lecture fund. About one hundred dollars has been

raised in this way. I attended a meeting of the Young Men's Lyceum on Friday evening last, and listened to an address by Doctor Richards of Cummington. The Doctor's style of delivery was animated and energetic, just what we admire. The way he handled those accursed pests of Society termed slanderers was, you better believe, without mittens. After the address came the discussion of the following question, viz., 'Ought spiritualism to be investigated?' An invitation was extended to all present to engage in the discussion, and the question was discussed mainly by members of the Worthington Lyceum. Well-knowing your invariable rule to publish no communication in your valuable paper which smells in the least of personality, we forego all criticism or witicism in connection with the discussion. But cannot, even at the risk of rejection, refrain from expressing a desire to examine the scales in which those arguments were weighed, just for curiosity's sake. Perhaps we might find a screw loose somewhere.

Yours,
Rover
c. 18

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The Tale of Peter Rabbit and the Flood of 1938

by Greta Pixley

It was a warm day and the door of my spacious, combination garage and wood-shed home had been left open so that I might hop in and out. I returned from a look at the great outdoors to find an unwelcome intruder in my home: Ginger Belle, the cocker spaniel belonging to our neighbor on the hill. She was eating from my food dish.

Times have changed since my ancestor, Peter the First, was forced to flee for his

life from Mr. McGregor, just for trying to take a few carrots from his garden. Now we rabbits have people trained to furnish us not only free rent but all the delicacies we can eat. And now there was Ginger Belle gobbling up all my just replenished food! I didn't say a word but started for her and I'm sure she saw murder in my eyes. She ran past me and "Ki-yied" up the road. I thumped along at her heels halfway up the hill, then turned and came home. That

was the last time she visited me.

The garage was not my first home. For several years I was the only occupant of a huge old barn. Both the barn and my people's house were built on the edge of a little brook, on the ground at the front with a high stone wall at the back for support. They had housed people and animals for over a hundred years. My two big boys and their tiny sister visited and fed me daily and I was happy there.

Then came the month of September, 1938. We had five days of hard rain and then the skies opened and dumped tons of water down on us, all at the same time, it seemed. It was getting dusky outside when I began to hear the big rocks grinding in the brook back of the barn. Then I heard water running in the road in front. The sounds became louder and louder. The old barn timbers began to creak and groan. The barn floor was covered with deepening water. I felt like screaming but decided it was too early for that. It's a well known fact that rabbits can make only one sound, a scream in extremity. I noticed a board leaning against one of the mangers and managed to climb up it into a dry manger. There I stayed through the night, listening to the rocks, the water, and a high wind in the tops of the trees on the hill above us. I must have slept for awhile, for I roused to hear a boy's voice calling "Peter!" The barn door had opened. The floor was at a strange angle and my boy didn't dare come in, but I hopped down the board and to the door. He carried me to my present home and here I have lived ever since.

Later that day a person the children called 'Aunt Lila' came to see us. I happened to be visiting in the kitchen then and heard all the talk about the storm.

"I never saw anything like this before," said the one the children called 'Grandma'. She had just returned from looking at the raging brook. "I'm soaked to the skin, just as if I wasn't wearing a raincoat. The brook is spreading over the whole meadow."

The children's mother was worried. "That huge barn just above the house — what if that should be undermined and sweep down against the house? Will this downpour never stop?" In a few minutes she took an umbrella and went outside. The brook had divided and there was now a stream of water coming down the road in front. She remembered the long, stout rope in the garage. It didn't seem as if it could be needed but she soon had it fastened from one of the porch pillars to the house across the street. Then she changed her soaked clothing as her mother had and everybody waited.

There were two houses just below ours, both built directly over the brook. 'Span-brook', the lower one, was vacant, but a widow, Mrs. Alen, who said she should call her house 'Straddlebrook', lived in the nearer house. When she saw the water coming down the road she thought she should cross to higher ground. She took a



Little Sister and Peter Rabbit
Courtesy of Greta Pixley

kitchen chair, started to test the depth on the water with it. It was instantly swept away by the swift water. Then she walked the one remaining unflooded ridge to our house. Now there were six worried people, and one frightened rabbit, waiting.

At last there were men's voices and a knock on the door. Two men from the little village below had come across on Mom's rope. Leaning against the rope they carried Mrs. Allen first, then Grandma, then Little Sister across the water to the safety of the house across the street. Mom and the two boys waded waist deep on their own. Now only Peter Rabbit was in danger.

Sometime in the night the rain stopped and flooding waters receded. Sheltered as our little town was we knew only the force of water that night and nothing of the havoc that wild winds had caused in other towns. The flood seemed enough to us. My barn was so nearly destroyed that it needed only a pull with a car to bring it down. Both ends of our home were gone up to the kitchen floor level, the lower end found in one piece leaning against the big elm a short distance away. The sleigh and tools that had been under the barn were now in the cellar of the house. The old kitchen floor, several inches lower

than that of the living room, was covered with mud. The bridge above us was gone; the cement bridge below stayed, but, like many other cement bridges, looked useless and ridiculous with no road near it. Our road was washed down to bedrock, three feet deep in places. But we were lucky: no one was hurt or washed away, not even Peter Rabbit.

As so often happens after bad weather, we were given two weeks of almost summer warmth and sunshine. There was no school, no roads for the school busses to travel, and the children took full advantage of the added vacation. The boys found some of the old barn timbers and boards ideal for making a raft for the gentled brook. One day they thought it would be fun to give me a ride on it. I didn't mind until it tipped just enough to send me into the water. As rabbits can't swim, I thought my time to scream had come, but how could I with my mouth full of water? Then both the boys jumped into the brook — shoes and clothes weren't as important as Peter Rabbit! — and I was rescued to live for many happy years and to tell you this story of the flood of 1938.

• • •

Winter Day in a Small Town

by Zenon D'Astous

6 A.M.

Coffee brewing. Fire crackling and snapping. It's 10 below zero. As I sit looking out the window, a thin wash of light stretches across the eastern sky. Only a few houses show signs of awakening. Now car lights can be seen coming east along the river road. As day pursues night, vapor clouds rise from the river. At minus 10 degrees, they hang in the sunlight and form on the stark black branches of the trees as hoar frost.

6:30 A.M.

Looking up and down the road, I see plumes of smoke spiraling up from many chimneys. More and more families are turning back to burning wood. A walk around town is almost like the old days. Special on Sundays. The very air is permeated with the pungent fragrance of wood smoke. A wood fire is like a friend in the room.

7 A.M.

Across town a row of school busses are being warmed up. They growl and sputter like big yellow cats poised to spring. At the driver's command they fan out onto country roads, stopping here and there, swallowing up little passengers along the way. High banks of snow embrace side streets. In years gone by, you could slide on any hilly street as very little salt or sand was used. When I was a boy we lived at the foot of such a street. The family car was put on blocks after the first snow. I can still see my mother frying doughnuts and making hot chocolate in a big blue sauce pan. Every girl and boy sliding down that winter hill was welcome.

10 A.M.

Late morning finds some activity in the center of town. Old men who have earned their rest walk in the sun — to the post office or to get the morning paper. They stop and talk, mostly about the weather and how much worse winter used to be when they were a boy. Listening to the small sounds of life I can hear a young mother calling to her child. A nuthatch walking upside down in an oak tree scolds as I walk by. In the distance a dog barks. A friend calls out to a friend. And from the school yard, recess is in full swing and a symphony of sounds drifts into the quiet. Along the way, the rural mailman reaches out to frosted metal boxes and warms them with letters from friends and the promise of spring in a seed catalog.

2:30 P.M.

In mid-afternoon school busses dot the road. Red lights flash! Doors swing open and the noisy cargo spills into the street and scatters in all directions. Teenagers walk and run shouting and throwing snowballs at one another. Some boys and girls, beyond all that nonsense, walk hand-in-hand. Warmed by young love, they are

lost in their own snowy Shangri-la. School's over for the day and scores of children gather on a nearby hill for sliding and belly whopping in the snow. Dressed in many colors they dot the winter landscape like early crocus. Happy voices ring out in the frosty air. Older boys with hockey sticks and skates head for the nearest pond. For others a short cross country run on skis is just the thing to do before supper.

5 P.M.

Twilight comes and the mountain walls surrounding the town are crowned with the fire of the setting sun. Pink and gray clouds ride the ridges. Now is the time when backyard bird feeders are the busiest as the feathery ones prepare for a winter night. As day deepens into dusk, squares of yellow light come from kitchen windows and rest upon the snow. In a small town it is the supper hour.

6 P.M.

In the center, street lights and signs light up — "Market", "Drugstore", "Hardware", and "Restaurant". Auto lights flash on! Off! White backup lights and red brake lights twinkle. Little puffs of exhaust vapor color in their glow and are spent in the air. People dart to and fro. Some to the post office to mail that last letter — and some to the market for a loaf of bread or a quart of milk for a waiting baby. Under-foot snow crunches and voices answer in the gathering darkness. Traffic lights flash red. Stop!! Green — Go! The arc of automobile lights fans out. Some turn left onto the bridge, some right at the highway. All are going home.

6:30 P.M.

At home, wives wait, children wait, supper waits, Daddy's late!

February, 1976

A Fish Story

by Bill Gaitenby

Just over a hundred years ago someone in Huntington suggested a unique way of raising money to help run the town. The idea was to stock fish in Norwich Pond and let the town taxpayers fish without charge while those who were not taxpayers were to be charged by the hour.

Accordingly, in 1876 with town meeting approval, the selectmen procured a lease for Norwich Pond from the Secretary of State. One hundred and twenty black bass weighing about one and a half pounds each were purchased at a cost of one hundred and twenty five dollars and put in the pond.

Fishing was prohibited for four years from the first day of June 1876. After that time fishing was to be allowed under such rules and regulations as the Commissioners on Inland Fisheries approved in writing.

The next year three thousand landlocked salmon fry were stocked in the Pond, a gift from the Commissioners on Inland Fisheries.

In 1879 rules and regulations for fishing were set up. Apparently there was quite some controversy about the rules, and there were special meetings to settle the differences.

Fishing was allowed, starting July 1, 1880. Large quantities of pickerel and perch were caught, the largest pickerel weighing five pounds and the largest perch weighing two and one half pounds.

About one thousand pounds of pickerel, bass, perch, and horned pout (bullheads) were caught in six weeks; then the Pond became roily and this reduced the catch. Only six pounds of bass were caught and no salmon. About \$250.00 had been spent on this venture; receipts totaled \$178.00

The stocking of bass and salmon appear-

ed to be a failure. It was found that the rack at the outlet had too coarse a mesh and many fish were going down Pond Brook. Fishermen had been catching landlocked salmon in the brook and river for two years. The records imply that a much finer mesh rack was installed in front of the coarse rack which was placed at the outlet by the paper company that had the right to regulate and use the Pond water.

In 1881 some 1500 pounds of pickerel, bass, perch, bullheads, and eels were caught. The weight of bass had increased to 33 pounds but still there was no salmon.

Mr. Albert Searle was the Pond Keeper and served without pay for the first three years. He lived where McKinneys lived for many years, and where the Eugene Kings live now. Mr. Searle was the grandson of Joel who built the King house. Albert Searle had two sons, John and Gaylord, who served as Selectmen at different times in the early 1900's.

In 1883 the Pond 'worked' nearly all summer, but even so 1200 pounds of fish were caught, including 75 pounds of black bass. Still no salmon were taken. Mr. Searle was paid \$6.85 which was one half of the receipts for that year.

The number of bass caught steadily increased in the early 80's. In 1884 it was 220 pounds.

Controlled fishing continued through 1887 (a period of eight years). It was discontinued because of low receipts. Even though fishing at Norwich Pond didn't make much money, this sport has been enjoyed right up to the present. Many bass, pickerel, perch, and bullheads are caught each year along with trout, which is the one game fish being stocked here annually.

The Fish Committee during the 1880's

was made up of the three Selectmen, and there were no changes in the Board during this period. The Chairman was Schuyler Clark who was a cousin to Robert Smith's great-grandfather. S. Clark was fishing through the ice at Norwich Lake in the late 1890's when he went through the ice. He died soon after due to exposure. The second selectman was Austin Rude, grandfather of Dorothy Munson Blackman. The third member was Lewis A. Clark who lived on Norwich Hill and was the great-great uncle of Philip B. Smith of Allen Coit Road.

The salmon, at least in the 1880's,

seemed to be non-existent, but in later years quite a few were taken. My father worked for my grandfather Haring at Mountain Air Inn which was on the East side of the Pond, from 1907 to the 20's. He said a number of salmon were taken during this period. The last salmon taken, which I know of, was by Clifton Gamble, Sr., about 1947 on the West side of the Pond. It was 25½ inches long and weighed nearly 8½ pounds.

Many fishermen would attest to the fact that bass and other fish have thrived in Norwich Pond.

• • •

Two Poems

by Dick Rhodes

NATURE

*Emerson Davis once told an unusual thing.
As I recall it was in the spring.
So I mulled and thrashed it
and looked for a rhyme
and just this morning it all came in time.
He asked me a question, said,
"What do you do?"
So I answered him quickly there under the blue:
"I teach in your school, science is my game."
Then he looked past my shoulder, said,
"I do the same!"*

*Yes, there's something to be said
for laying a stone to rest.
In a place that's proper
and suits it best.
For the toil and sweat on my horse's neck
Shows the strength of the stone.
A stone does not move easily.*

• • •

*An Old Home
Still Stands While
New Houses But
Perish With Just
A Wrinkle Of
Time*



Drawing by Dick Rhodes

About Our Contributors

HEATHER BARGERON shuttles back and forth between Worthington and Boston.

NATALIE BIRRELL moved from Montgomery to Michigan, but still draws lovely pictures for us.

LOIS BROWN is a long time resident of Worthington, free-lance writer, and photography hobbyist.

OLIVE COLE has lived in Worthington all her life and has supplied us with material several times.

KARIN COOK of Worthington has contributed many of our illustrations.

ZENON D'ASTOUS who lives in Huntington, has been absent from our pages for awhile . . . Welcome back!

BERNARD DREW from Housatonic is now one of the editors of STONE WALLS as well as free lance writer, photographer, and artist.

DONNA DREW (Mrs. Bernard) is an art teacher with the Southern Berkshire Regional District.

JORGE FERNANDEZ-SIERRA lives in Worthington and is an expert amateur photographer.

WILLIAM GAITENBY lives in Huntington.

IDA JOSLYN is one of the founding editors of STONE WALLS.

BROOKE LYNES lives in Cummington and has been with STONE WALLS since its beginnings.

DAVID LYNES is Brooke's son, is in seventh grade, and has written a number of articles for us.

LOUISE MASON, a resident of Russell, serves as literary editor for STONE WALLS.

HILARY METZGER is a ninth grade student who lives in New York in the winter, and in Worthington in the summer.

GRETA PIXLEY of Cummington has been a frequent contributor.

DICK RHODES lives in Worthington, and teaches science at the Gateway Middle School.



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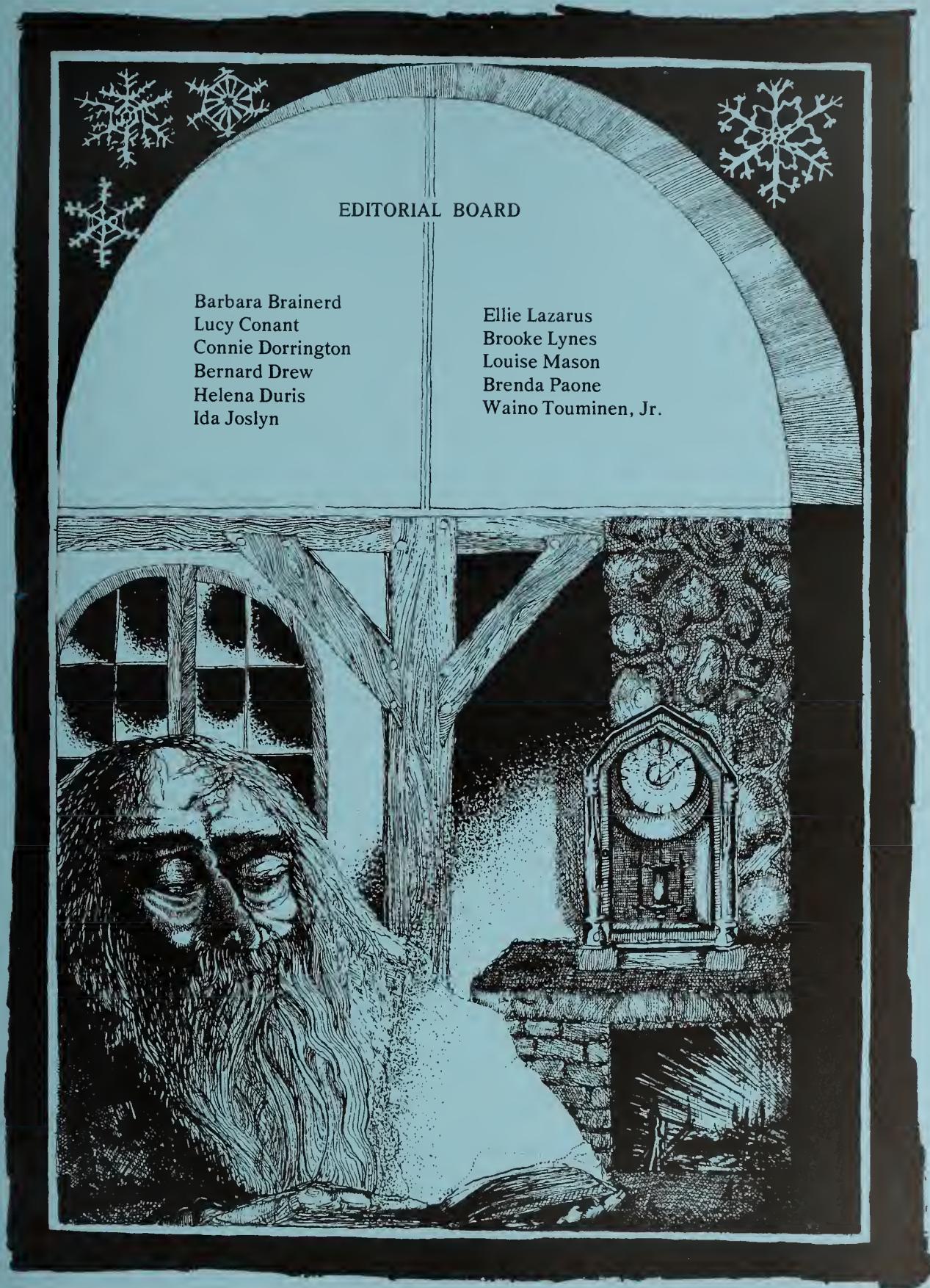
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